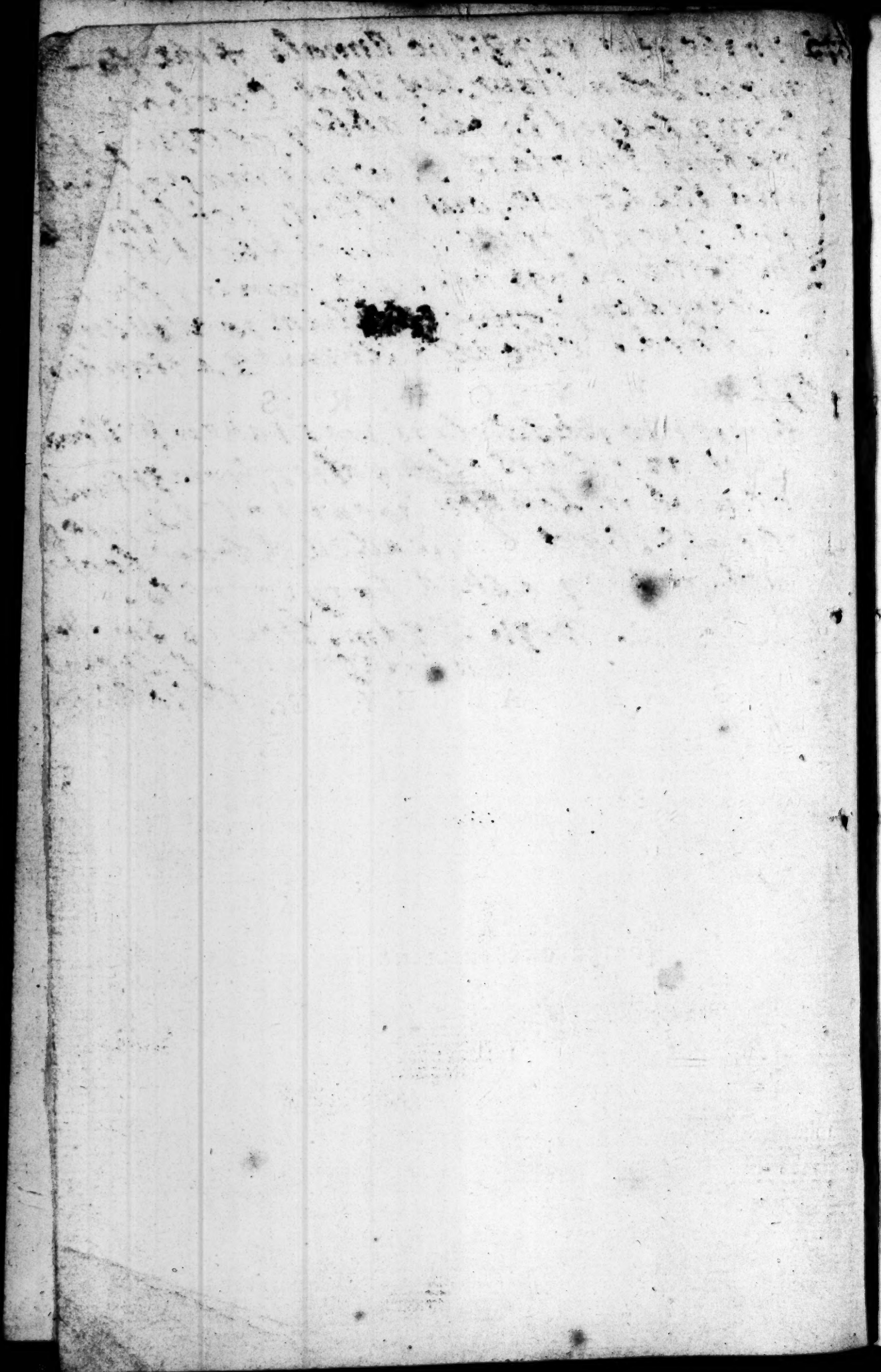
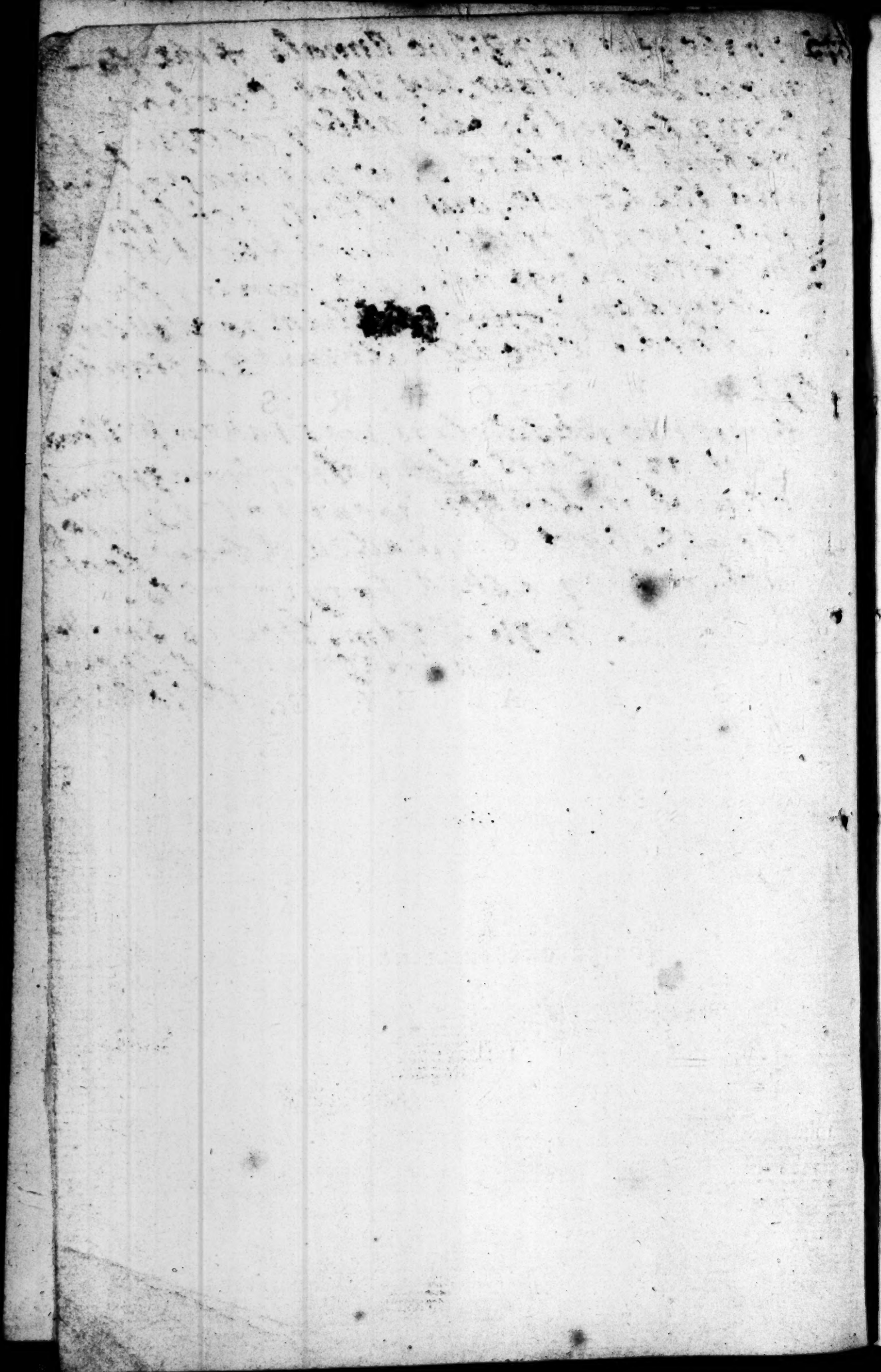






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M E M O I R S

Tho. Austen
of OF *Rochester.*
O S N E R A B B E Y

N E A R O X F O R D.

COLLECTED FROM THE MOST
AUTHENTIC AUTHORS;

TOGETHER WITH
VARIOUS OBSERVATIONS AND REMARKS.

By JOHN SWAINE, Esq; *K*
[*of Windsor*]



L O N D O N:

PRINTED FOR W. HARRIS, AT N° 70, IN
ST PAUL'S CHURCH-YARD.

M D C C L X I X.

W. M. O. L. S.

O. S. W. E. L. A. B. E. Y.

COLLECTED FROM THE FOOT

AN FINEST AND MOST

TOO W. M. O. L. S.



BY JOHN J. D. L. S.

L. O. N. D. O. N.

PRINTED FOR W. L. L. S. AT A. L. S.

ST. PAUL'S CHURCH

IN THE CITY OF LONDON

M E M O I R S

O F

O S N E Y A B B E Y, &c.

THE founding of churches in the days of our forefathers, was so frequent, and their reasons for this practice, very often, so ridiculous, that a person who relates them will hardly gain credit with readers of the present generation. This was the case with regard to this once famous Abbey of which I am now to treat. And that I may give the reader the fuller and clearer idea of every material circumstance relating thereto, I shall cast what I have to offer upon this subject into the following method. I shall treat,

I. Of its *Foundation* and *Endowments*.

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II. Of

II. Of the *State* of it before the *Suppression*.

III. Of its *Suppression* and *Dissolution*.
After which I shall take some notice,

IV. Of those several *Draughts* which are yet extant of this once famous and magnificent edifice. And shall then add,

V. Some *Farther Particulars* relating to the same subject.

C H A P. I.

Of the Foundation and Endowments of OSNEY Abbey.

THE church of St MARY the Virgin of *Osney*, was founded in the year 1129, by ROBERT D'OYLEY the second, the son of NIGELLOUS, which NIGELLOUS flourished in the time of HENRY I. surnamed BEAUCLERK, and was chamberlain of his household. This church was builded, as CAMDEN expresses it (*a*), amidst the divided

(*a*) CAMDEN's *Britannia*, fol. 379.

vided rivers not far from the castle; or, to express it more plainly, in a parcel of ground surrounded by the river, under the view of the castle of *Oxford*. As to the reason of its erection, it was, like that of many others, as I have but just observed, very absurd and ridiculous. The occasion of it is said to be as follows (*b*).

The pleasant and agreeable situation of this place gave frequent occasion to a noble lady of *Oxford*, called EDITH FORNE, wife of ROBERT D'OYLEY, or OILLEY, as he is sometimes called, to recreate and solace herself here. In these her frequent walks, she is said to have seen a great number

(*b*) I think proper in this place to inform the reader, that the authors from whom I have taken the principal materials for this history, are DUGDALE's *Monasticon Anglicanum*, STEVEN's *Continuation*, HUTTON's *Antiquities of Oxford*, and WILLIS's *History of Cathedrals*; though I have not paid a superstitious regard to any of them. If it should be objected, that what I have here published, is no more than what the world has been made acquainted with already; I would only say, in answer thereto, That few persons, comparatively, have had the opportunity to consult the authors above mentioned; and I believe I am the first person who has endeavoured to form their several accounts, into a regular plan or history.

number of *Pies*, gathered together upon a tree, by the side of the river, and making an hideous chattering and noise. She took but little notice of them at first; but finding the same to be repeated both a second and third time, and the birds seeming, as she imagined, to direct their chattering towards her, she sent for her confessor, who was a canon of St *Fridswides*, demanding of him what all this might mean. He, glad of such an opportunity, and taking an advantage of the superstition and simplicity of this lady, told her he would meet her there the next day, and then give her some farther account of the matter, as it should then seem to him. Accordingly, coming to the place at the time appointed, and finding the same noise as before, "O, madam, (said he) these are not *Pies*, but so many poor souls in purgatory, who thus beg and request succours and relief." *And is it so indeed,* (replied the lady) *then if ROBIN, my husband, will concede to my request, I will endeavour to bring these poor souls to rest.* And relating the matter to her husband accordingly, she so far prevailed with him, that a little while after, with the consent of

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THEOBALDUS, Archbishop of *Canterbury*, and titular Bishop of *Lincoln*, in whose diocese it was, she founded a church upon the banks of the river where the *Pies* chattered, dedicating it to *St Mary of Osney*, and allotting it for a residence of secular canons of *St AUSTIN*, in the year before-mentioned, and making *RODALPHUS*, her confessor, the first prior thereof.

I have thus related the circumstances of this account of its first foundation, as I find them in the history of those times; and as for the folly and simplicity attending it, other persons are to be accountable

This church, (says a very eminent author (c) consisted of as much building as *Christ Church*, which is the present Cathedral of *Oxford*, and as any two parochial churches in that city beside, except *Saint MARY's*, though the situation of it was, upon some accounts, not so commodious; for it was erected above a quarter of a mile out of town, a little south-west of *St THOMAS's*, otherwise *St NICHOLAS's* church, between that and the place where the mill now stands. But for a further
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(c) *WOOD's Antiquities of Oxford.*

and more particular description of it, I must refer the reader to the next chapter, and proceed, in the mean time, to speak of the many donations and endowments of its various and generous benefactors.

But before I do this, it is necessary I should acquaint the reader, that it was at first only a priory of small extent; but that, in a few years, by the large donations of several liberal and generous persons, it became an abbey with a considerable revenue. In the year 1247, it was rebuilt; and the same year the Pope's Legate proclaimed forty days indulgence and remission of sin, to all such as would give something toward the rebuilding of this edifice; which excited several persons to vie with each other in contributing large sums of money for this purpose, and for erecting two very high and bulky towers, which, together with the rest of the church, are now totally destroyed.

Of the rest of the donations, together with the several charters relating to this famous structure, I shall now give the reader some account.

The

The first deed was by ROBERT OILLEY, and was dated in 1129. By this deed he gave to these canons, all he had in the isle of *Osney*, with the churches of *Chidelinton*, *Weston*, *Hockennorton*, *Cluindon*, *Senestan*, and *Lestretton*, together with the town of *Ethon*, &c.

In a second deed he more largely recites all his donations; and his son

HENRY OILLEY, in a subsequent deed, confirms all his father's grants, and adds parcels of lands of his own.

MATTHEW, Earl of *Flanders*, granted to *Osney* Abbey, the fishery of *Bentun*, which was farther confirmed by his brother PHILIP, Earl of *Flanders*.

The charter of EDWARD III. mentions those of three kings, namely, HENRY II. and III. and that of King JOHN, together with the deeds of many other donors, confirming the same.

There were afterward other lands given by several persons, which it would be too tedious to mention, and which would af-

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TO MEMOIRS OF OSNEY ABBEY.

ford but little entertainment to the reader, They were all confirmed by the charter of the Bishop of *Lincoln*, in whose diocess the church stood, before the erection of a new bishopric of *Oxford*, in the time of HENRY VIII. as we shall see hereafter.

About twenty one years after the foundation of the church, the Bishop of *Lincoln* did translate all the seculars, belonging to the church of St GEORGE, in the castle of *Oxford*, to this place (*d*). There was afterwards an expulsion of these seculars, and regular canons were introduced in their stead; at which time followed the principal charter of this church, in which was an addition of other lands and tenements, confirmed by several Popes, Bishops and Kings of *England*.

C H A P. II.

Of the State of the Abbey before the Suppression.

I NOW proceed to give the reader some account of this famous Abbey, as it stood in its flourishing state and condition,

(*d*) This was about the year 1150, the fifteenth of King STEPHEN.

tion, before that general devastation which laid, not only this, but multitudes of other spacious and venerable buildings of the like nature, through this kingdom, in heaps of confusion and rubbish; so that very little now remains of many of them, to give us any idea of their former grandeur and magnificence, and of *this* church in particular, not one stone is now left upon another.

This Abbey, as I have observed before, stood at about a quarter of a mile distance from *Oxford*, and about one mile from *Carfax* conduit. The usual way which led to it from thence, was over *Bookbinders* bridge, and by a place called the *Humel*; over a broad and paved way, which had the name of *Church-lane*, to the first gate of the Abbey, from which was a row of houses till you came, after this, to another gate, which was much larger, erected by Abbot LEECH, of whom we shall have occasion to speak more hereafter. It was built of free stone, and had an image over it of the Virgin MARY, to whom the church was dedicated. This image or statue was in the middle, and had on one

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side



side of it the arms of St GEORGE, and on the other that of the family of the D'OYLEY's, which was also the arms of the Abbey, with the addition of the pastoral staff to the two bendlets, as in the margin.

Having entered this gate, which was on the north side of the church, you came into a large and beautiful court or quadrangle, chiefly of stone, where was a cloister on the right hand, decked and boarded with a roof, upon which were the arms of several benefactors, with rebuffes and allusions to the names of those persons, and particularly the Abbots, who contributed toward the building thereof; the principal of whom was Abbot LEECH, before mentioned.

Going then through the cloister, the next building of which we are to take notice, and to which we were then conducted, was the refectory or common hall, standing opposite the great gate, and on the south side of the quadrangle before mentioned. This was a large and curious structure, erected by Abbot LEECH. It was the common place of resort, where they

they all met at the found of the bell, to take their daily refreshments.

They were much to be commended for some of the customs observed by them on these occasions, *viz.* That while they were receiving food for the support of their bodies, they might have some spiritual refreshment conveyed to their minds; the scriptures being always read and expounded to them, while they were at their ordinary meals. Other orders upon these occasions were, That no contentious or quarrelsome words should be allowed. That every one be present at the blessing of the table, and, in case of absence, to be subject to a penalty; or, if he came in afterward, to sit at the lower end of the table. Whatever was left of the meat, was conveyed to the alms-houses, adjoining to the Abbey.

The kitchen was contiguous to the refectory, on the left side.

On the south side of the refectory aforesaid, was the dormitory. This was a place allotted for the reception of the sick monks,

monks, whither they were removed from their chambers, and where they were allowed the diet proper for persons in their condition. They had a chapel or oratory adjoining thereto, and built by the same Abbot LEECH.

The next place of which I am to take notice, was an oblong room called the *dorter*, and was divided into several partitions, like those in our hospitals, in each of which there was a bed for the several canons of this church. There was likewise a candle set up for every one of them, which was to serve till the time of performing their nocturnal devotions, which returned at certain hours. When the candles were lighted up, the keys of this place were carried by the prefect or vicar, to the servitor, and were by him opened in the morning, at the appointed time; when each monk had their summons to rise, and had an hour given them to get ready for the further service which was then required of them.

The next building in the Abbey was the lodgings of the Abbot, which were in
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the ground adjoining to the mill-head, though not the least remains of them are now to be discovered ; and were very large, fair and magnificent. The hall belonging to them was more fit for a common society, than for any single man. In these lodgings, not only the Abbot and his family, but sometimes strangers and tenants of quality, used to reside, except upon those days when his presence was required at the public refectory. This place, we are told, was likewise built in the time of Abbot LEECH, whose name we have had such frequent occasion to mention. The great chamber adjoining to the hall, was also built by the same person, and was standing in the year 1718. The great stone staircase was likewise standing within the memory of some persons who were then living, and was, according to their account of it, broad enough for five or six persons to go up in abreast.

The only remaining building belonging to this Abbey, of which I shall take notice, was a row of houses between the two gates. These buildings were allotted for the

the relief of poor clerks, and were called *Domus Dei*, or, The house of God. The poor inhabitants of these houses, subsisted, for the most part, upon the meat which was sent them from the table of the monks, and which, considering the indigent circumstances of these poor people, was a very comfortable relief to them; especially as they had, beside this, an annual allowance from the Abbey. For this generous benefaction they were indebted to the liberality of several persons, who gave lands for this purpose; and particularly to one GALFRIDUS GYBERWIN, who granted them his tenements, and all his lands toward their maintenance. They had a church adjoining to their habitation, which was dedicated to St NICHOLAS, and also another, in which divine service was celebrated every day. One NICHOLAS WESTON, who died in 1271, left forty shilling *per ann.* for the use of this church; which was at first appropriated for the benefit of these poor monks; but, afterward, leave was given by HUGH, Bishop of *Lincoln*, that servants, tradesmen and mechanics, who lived within the limits,

limits, and also strangers and pilgrims, who might occasionally resort hither, might likewise frequent this chapel, and join with them in their devotions. If the leave which was given to those persons, had been given to the inhabitants of St NICHOLAS parish, to have resorted thither, (to which they seem to have had a right) this Abbey had not been intirely destroyed to this day.

I have now said all I think proper with regard to the principal buildings belonging to this place. I have only further to observe, before I come to speak of the church itself, properly so called, that there were some other houses before the gate, of which it will not be amiss to take some notice. At the west end of the building, and on the other side of the old water-gate, there were tradesmen of several professions. These houses were so many in number, that they formed a sort of village. Their employment was to work for the shoemakers, bookbinders, &c. belonging to the Abbey, and also for other religious houses adjoining. All these persons, who were within this place, formed a parish,

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and used to attend divine service, by the permission of the Bishop of *Lincoln*, at the church of St NICHOLAS, at the west gate of the Abbey.

Thus we have seen what abundant provision was made for the ease and comfort of these ecclesiastics. Perhaps some will be ready to think, that the indolence and idleness, the pleasure and luxury, in which they spent their useless and unprofitable lives, did, by no means, deserve such a profusion of conveniences.

I come now, in the next place, to give some account of the Abbey, or church itself, properly so called.

Only before I do this, I would just inform the reader, that though this was not one of the Mitred Abbies, yet the Abbot thereof had a seat in Parliament, but was not properly a baron or peer of the kingdom (*e*).

This

(*e*) The difference between Mitred and Parliamentary Abbies, I take to be this, *viz.* That the Abbots of the former were barons of the realm; whereas those of the others, or, at least, the most
part

This church then was a fabric more than ordinary beautiful, according to the description of it that is come down to us, from those persons who take their accounts from the very best authors. It was second to no other Abbey in the kingdom; it was the pride and admiration, not only of this country, but of all other countries beside. The grandeur and magnificence hereof, was expressed in its excellent architecture, according to the fashion of those times. Every window in the building presented us with a uniformity of pillars, each of which bore a statue. The pinnacles upon the top, were equally marshalled, and it had two stately towers, one at the west end, called the campanile, and the other between the body and the chancel, on the north side. There were many other stately carvings to be seen about it; which gave great encouragement to many persons, and particularly to foreigners, to take draughts and prospects thereof. Neither was it only curious and beautiful on

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the

part of them, had only a seat in Parliament; though (as Dr FULLER observes in his *History of Abbies*) their being summoned to the house of peers depended intirely upon the humour or will of the prince.

the outside, as is the case with many of our most famous and beautiful churches of modern date; but the inside of it was rather more magnificent and august, as well as more costly and sumptuous than the rest. It not only entertained the eye, but struck the beholder with veneration and surprise. Upon the hangings in the choir, were wrought several scripture stories of exquisite workmanship. Upon the floor were the flat stones, the tombs, with the various inscriptions upon the several persons who were there interred: all these monuments, at the suppression of the church, were intirely defaced and destroyed.

The extent of this church (as I have already hinted) at its first foundation, was but small, in comparison to what it was afterward, at the rebuilding of it by Abbot LEECH. This Abbot was assisted herein by one BEAUFORT, a knight, both of whose images were cut in stone, and set up in this church. The chapel of the Virgin MARY, at the west end of the choir, was also built by JOHN LEECH, except the roof and the adjoining tower.

The

The high altar was built by JOHN APPLE-TREE, Abbot of this place, and was dedicated the 6th of *July*, 1267, by RICHARD GRAVESEND, then Bishop of *Lincoln* (*f*), at which time an indulgence of forty days was granted by the Pope. So that upon occasion of the building of an altar, a free leave and indulgence was given to sin for forty days!

There was likewise a chapel in the middle isle adjoining, which was erected by an unknown hand, and dedicated to St THOMAS, wherein daily service was celebrated for the health of the soul of the founder, if you can believe it had any more health communicated to it by means of these prayers. There were several other chapels on each side of the double isles of the church; but who were the founders of them, or their benefactors, is not mentioned

(*f*) This RICHARD GRAVESEND, or DE GRAVESEND, was afterward Bishop of *London*, and died at *Fulham*, December 9, 1303. He was buried in St PAUL's Church, the 15th of the same month; twelve hundred pound and a half in wax tapers, being used upon this occasion. DUGDALE's *History of St PAUL's*, fol. 33.

tioned by any of the authors who have treated of this Abbey.

At the west end of this building was the campanile, which remained intire till about the beginning of the present century (g). Within this tower there was a very large and melodious ring of bells, which were then thought to be the finest in *England*, JOHN MAJOR, a Scotch historian, speaks of them with high encomiums. At the first founding of this church, these bells were but three in number, beside the litany and the saints bell; but were afterward increased to seven by Abbot LEECH, as appears from an old *Rationale*, belonging sometime to this place, which mentions the office of each bell in particular. At the first setting up of these bells, they had a different name given to each of them, by the ridiculous and superstitious custom of christening them, as they then called it. But, before the suppression of the Abbey, they had it seems
got

(g) Some tell us this tower was destroyed in the time of the civil war, and that it was standing in the year 1644.

got new names, being all of them, before that time, cast over again. One of these bells was of uncommon size, being the largest in *England* (b).

Having thus finished my account of the church itself, which I have collected from the best descriptions that are extant thereof; I now proceed to give an account of the several persons who were interred in this famous Abbey.

It would have given me a much greater satisfaction, had I been able to present the reader with a more particular description of the monuments in this church, and also with their several epitaphs and inscriptions. But, as most of the latter were obliterated before the dissolution of the Abbey, none of the historians have been able to preserve their memory, or to give us any tolerable account of them. I must therefore content myself with only presenting the reader with the following, which was made upon one KARKERAGE, who died in 1435.

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(b) This is the bell called great TOM of *Oxon*.

Anno mil. C quater Domini jungatur & X ter
 Et quinta moritur Katherine, nocte beata;
 Hic fuerat cantor bonus, optimus Organifator,
 Vir pius ac humilis cunctos Sermonibus hortans.

The first and most remarkable monument I shall here mention, is that of EDITH D'OYLEY, who gave several lands to this church in her widowhood; she was the wife of the founder, and died about the year 1152. She was buried on the north side of the high altar, her image of free stone lying upon her tomb, in the habit of a vowess, and holding a heart in her right hand. Upon the wall of the arch over her, was represented her coming to *Osney*, her confessor waiting on her, as before related, and the tree with the chattering *Pies* painted upon it. All this, it seems, remained perfect and intire at the time of the suppression of the Abbey; and the reader will so indulge a professed lover of antiquity, as to allow me to say, it is a pity they did not remain so to this day.

HENRY D'OYLEY, the first of that christian name of the family in *England*, was son

son and heir of ROBERT D'OYLEY the second, founder of the Abbey, and who bestowed many lands upon it, was interred in the middle of the presbytery, under a stone of flat marble, upon which was a crose floree. He died in 1163.

HENRY D'OYLEY, eldest son and heir of the aforesaid HENRY, the first of that name, who in 1232 was buried in the new addition, about the latter end of the same year.

ADAM, Bishop of St *Asaph*, who died at *Osney* in 1181, was buried in the said church.

JOHN ST JOHN, a famous man of those times, was buried on the north side of the choir, in a very fine and large tomb of marble, his wife being buried by him, under a flat stone, without date. Some are of opinion, that this person might probably be the father of ROGER ST JOHN, who was killed in the battle of *Avesham*.

In the chapel, known by the name of *Ludy* chapel, was buried one PLESSET, in a fair tomb, with an image upon it. He

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is supposed to have been one HUGH PLESSET, who lived at *Hedington*, a village near *Oxford*, in the fifth of EDWARD I. and who gave his lands by will to this Abbey.

JOHN DE PLESSET, Earl of *Warwick*, is supposed by Sir WILLIAM DUGDALE, to have been likewise interred here. As also one

HUGH PLESSET, of whom I find nothing more recorded than his name.

A lady, whose name was WIGHORN, who died *May* 6, 1272, was buried near the Abbots of this place.

PHILIP DE EYA, or ELY, treasurer to HENRY I. who died upon St ANDREW'S day, 1275, was likewise interred near the Abbots.

STEPHEN DE TEMPLAR, who gave a mead in the parish of *Fullwell*, to this Abbey, was likewise buried here, though the time of his death is not mentioned.

NICHOLAS MORRIS, who gave two caratate of land, (as I find them called) to this

this place, and which gift was confirmed by HELINA, his daughter, lies buried here also, though of the time of his death there is no account. The next person I find mentioned, as buried in this place, is

ELLA, or ALLA, Countess of *Warwick*, who was interred before the high altar in this church, at the head of the tomb of HENRY D'OYLEY, in the habit of a vows, graven upon a copper-plate. There is much said of her charitable donations, of which I shall give the reader some account.

During the time of her widowhood she gave money for the help and relief of poor scholars; which money was to be borrowed by them upon pledges, and was, by the Chancellor of *Oxon*, to be put into a chest or coffer, which was, for many years, called by the name of *Warwick* chest (*i*). By an order published in *March* 1293, it was appointed that the said scholars were to mention and pray for the soul of ELLA, Countess of *Warwick*, next to that of

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HENRY

(*i*) This chest was formerly kept in St MARY's Church, *Oxon*.

HENRY III. she being his kinswoman. She was the daughter of WILLIAM LONSPEE, Earl of *Salisbury*, son of the bastard Earl of that name, which HENRY II. had by the noted ROSAMOND CLIFFORD. She died, as it appears, on the 9th of *February*, 1297, though Sir WILLIAM DUGDALE, in his *Warwickshire*, places it three years after (k).

The last person I shall mention, as here interred, is one BEAUFORT, a knight, a benefactor to this church, and who was buried in the choir, at the head of the tomb of the aforementioned Countess.

There were likewise many other great and honourable persons, (beside above twenty of the Abbots ;) who were buried in this Abbey, whose tombs were translated in 1272, and laid before the high altar. They were interred under rich and stately monuments, though no mention is made in history of the persons to whom they belonged.

Having thus acquainted the reader with every thing worthy of notice with relation
to

(k) DUGDALE's *Warwickshire*, fol. 307.

to this church, and to the various buildings belonging thereto; and also given him an account of the various persons who were here interred; I shall now put a period to this chapter, after I have taken the liberty to make one observation, which is this, *viz.* That though I do not think myself to be any way prejudiced in favour of a monastic life, (which I look upon as a very useless and insignificant one) yet I cannot but entertain a sort of solemn veneration and regard for these noble, these ancient and venerable piles. When I survey the awful gloom and solemnity attending these sacred repositories of the dead; they excite within *me*, more pleasing, as well as more useful contemplations, than are generally raised by conversing with the gayer amusements of life, to which the generality of mankind are so apt to give the preference.

C H A P. III.

Of its Suppression and Dissolution.

ABOUT three years before the final dissolution of this church, it was translated into a bishop's see. In RYMER's *Federa*, vol. xiv. fol. 734. are the several patents of King HENRY VIII. for this purpose, dated *September 1, 1542*, in which he fixed the Cathedral at *Oxford*: and he granted to the new Bishop of *Osney*, the same privileges which the Bishop of *Lincoln*, out of whose diocese it was taken, enjoyed in *Oxford*; reserving nevertheless to the Bishop of *Lincoln*, his visitatorial power at the colleges of *Oriel*, *Brazennose* and *Baliol*.

As to the new cathedral of *Christ-Church*, which rose (like a Phenix) out of the ashes or ruins of the old; it would be foreign to the design of these *Memoirs*, were I to give a particular description of it. I must therefore refer those of my readers as are desirous of information in this point, to Mr WILLIS's *History of Cathedrals*, vol. ii. p. 407. where they will find

find an exact draught and inography of this church, and a very full and large account of the occasion of its first erection and foundation. I now return to the history of *Osney*.

The time of its continuance as a Bishop's see was but short, *viz.* not above three years. "The foundation (says HUTTON (1) was large and ample, of one Bishop, with his revenues and portions, allotted severally to himself; of one Dean and six Prebendaries, Priests secular of this chapter, of Chaplains, Singing men, Choristers, and an Organist for divine service; of servants and officers attending in every several charge and office." Furnished in this manner, it flourished for a small space of time; but, from the time of its first foundation, (which was, as we have seen before, in the year 1129) for the space of four hundred and ten years. It was then, in the thirty first year of King HENRY VIII. finally surrendered into his hand by ROBERT KING, the last Abbot thereof; and who was, upon this church being first converted

(1) HUTTON's *Antiquities of Oxon*, p. 320.

converted into a Bishop's see, the first Bishop of *Oxford*, and at the same time titular Bishop of *Roan*, as we have already mentioned. This Abbey was valued at the suppression of it, at 624*l.* 10*s.* 2*d.* *per annum.*

What were the particular reasons which induced this arbitrary and capricious monarch, to translate the bishopric of *Osney* to that of *Christ-Church* (which before that time was the monastery of *St Fridswides*) at *Oxford*, it does not appear to me very easy to determine; neither is it indeed very material to enquire. The reasons which induced King HENRY hereunto, seem, however, to be, in a great measure, very much of a piece with all the other actions of his life, which were governed more by principles of revenge, of obstinacy and self-will, than by any other dictates or motives, either of law or of reason. And this I think is sufficiently evident from the history of all the other actions of his life; though I deny not but that he had, at the same time, some great and good qualities to recommend him.

How

How long this building or structure remained in being, after the suppression of it, I cannot directly affirm. It appears however to have been standing in the time of Queen MARY, since we are expressly told that mass was then celebrated in this church. There is a great deal of reason to suppose, that this Abbey, (together with several other edifices of this kind, in other parts of the kingdom) suffered greatly by the indiscreet zeal of the army, in the time of the civil wars, in the reign of CHARLES I. as well as afterward; though it was certainly very much damaged, long before that period. However, it remained firm, and fit for the uses for which it was at first intended, till the beginning of the reign of Queen ELIZABETH. This would naturally lead me to take some notice of those few remaining draughts of the ruins of it, which are come down to the present time, and which I shall do in the next chapter.

C H A P. IV.

*Of the Draughts that are yet extant of this
once famous Abbey.*

IT seems not a little surprizing, that during the time this church remained in its state of splendor and magnificence, so few draughts and prospects should be taken of it. We have been told indeed by some authors (as I have taken notice in the third chapter) that several foreigners came over into *England* for this purpose. But what is now become of these valuable performances of theirs, which would have been so much esteemed by many, as very curious pieces of antiquity, we are not able to give any account.

As it is almost impossible therefore, to form any idea of its former grandeur, from any thing of this kind: so we are intirely as incapable of doing it, from those few remaining draughts of the ruins of it, of which I am now to give the reader some account in this chapter.

The

The first of these I shall mention, (and it is, as far as I know, the very first of this kind that is extant) is that of RALPH AGGAS, in his map, or rather view of the city of *Oxford*, taken in the year 1566, but not published till 1578, about the 20th year of Queen ELIZABETH (*m*). This representation of it, though but small, is, I think, the most compleat of any I have met with. It presents us not only with a north view of this church, which appears to have been then intirely unroofed, and scarce any of the buttreses remaining on that side of it; but it likewise represents some of the buildings once belonging to the Abbey; and, particularly, the great gate or entrance into the quadrangle before the same side of this edifice. The buildings, it is true, appear so detached from each other, that we are able, from thence, to form but a very incompleat and

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(*m*) The same person published likewise a view or map of *London*, taken about the year 1560, which growing exceeding scarce, was re-ingraved by VIRTU in the year 1737, on a large size, with the arms of Queen ELIZABETH, and of the city of *London*, and is perhaps the most curious print of that nature that is now extant.

imperfect idea, of the former grandeur and magnificence of the whole. But, even from *this* view of it, imperfect as it is, we may be able to collect, in some measure, what a large space of ground it once occupied, and what an appearance it must make, when not only the church itself, but all the other buildings adjacent thereto, remained in their full glory, and unspoiled of any of their ornaments and beauties.

The next draught of this nature, of which I shall take notice, is a curious painting upon glass, which is in a window in the south isle of *Christ-Church, Oxon*, over the tomb of Bishop KING, the last Abbot of *Osney*. This is a view of only part of the south side of the Abbey, *viz.* from the west tower, to the trunsome, or south cross of the church. In the original painting, instead of a representation of the body or nave of the church, is the portrait of Bishop KING, in his pontifical vestments, with a mitre upon his head, and holding a pastoral staff in his right hand. But, in the copy which I have of it, (and which was procured me by the interest

interest of a worthy friend) the image of Bishop KING is omitted. In this painting, (as well as in all the other draughts that have ever come to my knowledge) the roof of the church appears intirely wanting, and there are no representations of so much as the ruins of any of the other buildings. The entrance into the church, at the south door, appears exceeding strong and lively, as does also the remains of the west tower, as far as the south east prospect of it, which is all of that part of the church, represented in this draught of it.

The last draught of this nature I shall mention, is that in the second volume of the Monasticon, though it is but in a very few copies of that work. It was procured for the use of Sir WILLIAM DUGDALE, by JOHN AUBERY, Esq; who wrote the perambulation of *Surry*, in five volumes. It is indeed rather a view of *rubbish* than of *ruins*, and tends only to confound and disgust the beholder, instead of affording him any real pleasure and satisfaction. There appears nothing in it intire, but the west tower; all the rest of the ingrav-
ing

ing being only a representation of some rude fragments of stone, which seem to hang in a very dangerous manner, and so as to threaten destruction to those persons who, in those days, durst venture under the shadow of them (*n*).

There is likewise an east and west view of some buildings or out-houses, once belonging to this Abbey, in HEARNE'S edition of the *Tex. Roffen*. But, as they give us no manner of idea of this Abbey in its former state, but only of some inferior buildings detached from it, I hardly think them worthy of our notice.

The ruins of this once famous structure are now no more: and the very ground upon which it once stood (like that of the temple at *Jerusalem*) has been ploughed up; so that not the least remains of any part of it are now to be discovered. The contemplation of this cannot

(*n*) When this view of it was taken is not easy to determine. It must, however, I think, have been long after the two other draughts of it, before-mentioned, since much more appears to have been then standing of it, than is here represented.

not but teach us the transitory and perishing nature of all human glory, For, as SHAKESPEAR expresses it,

The cloud cap'd tow'rs,
The gorgeous palaces,
The solemn temples,
This great globe,
Shall one day be dissolv'd;
And, like the baseless fabric of a vision,
Leave not a wreck behind.

CHAP.

C H A P. V.

Some further Particulars relating to the foregoing History.

HAVING mentioned all that I find worthy of notice relating to the description of this Abbey, from the time of its foundation, to that of its dissolution; and having seen the very *ruins* of it perish, as it were, from our sight; I shall now, for a conclusion to these *Memoirs*, further offer to my reader a few particulars relating to this subject, which could not, so properly, be introduced into the foregoing history.

I.

The Abbot of *Osney*, on a certain day, caused all the bread in the house, except that in the refectory, to be distributed to poor people. That being done, and they sent away, they told their fellows how well they had fared. They, thinking to receive the same favour, all came, a little before the canons went to dinner, crying at the gate for relief. The *Janitor* hearing

ing them make such a moan told the Abbot, who beholding and pitying their case, went to the refectory, and finding the bread provided for the canon-monks lying upon each trencher, gave it all to the beggars at the gate. Which being done, the canons came with strong appetites to the refectory; where, though a minute before, their bread was taken away, yet every one found his portion intire, and lying in the same place. *HOSTWICK Chron.* A true monkish story, and, as such, to be credited or not, as the reader pleases.

II.

At the entrance of WILLIAM DE SUTTON into the office of Dean, or, at the time of his installation, a palfry was extorted from him by a certain officer at *Oxon*, who, in the audience of all the assembly, at that time met together, did, with a solemn oath taken before them all, swear, that he would never instal any Abbot, unless he would send him a palfry, or horse, accoutered with all his harness: which being there uttered, and every one ashamed because of the presence of Bishops and Noblemen there assembled, did

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forthwith, lest the company should be unexpectedly dissolved, by a solemn protestation and appeal, deliver a palfry to him. But, afterward, (says my author) before the official could see his error, or recal the enormity of the fact, he was taken with a grievous disease, which was the occasion of his taking upon him a religious habit, or, in other words, of his entering into holy orders, which we hope was a means of his being more holy and orderly afterward. *Lives of the Abbots.*

III.

The following I relate merely upon the authority of that great antiquary Mr THOMAS HEARN, from a note in his edition of *Gul. Nubrigensis*, p. 798. “ I remember, says he, when it happened not many years ago, to a certain building, raised partly out of stones brought from Osney Abbey, many of the foundations of which Abbey, (which had fine walks (o), some of which may be now traced)

(o) These walks were most of them on the south side of the church, and were diversified with dove-houses, fish ponds, &c. and with every thing else that could make the place delightful and agreeable.

“ traced) were then dug up, and others
“ have been since, particularly when the
“ soil on which it stood was first plough-
“ ed up, which was in the beginning of
“ the year 1717-18, that the same build-
“ ing was raised to a considerable height,
“ of a sudden a good part of it cleft from
“ the rest, fell down, and had like to have
“ done considerable damage.” This ac-
cident, the learned, but too superstitious
author, attributes, as I imagine, as a judg-
ment from heaven, for so very wicked and
unpardonable a crime, as the pulling down
and demolishing of this once famous and
magnificent structure.

T H E E N D.



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